



FRONTEX EVALUATION REPORT 2015

EPN CONCEPT

JO EPN Triton 2015

Operations Division
Joint Operations Unit
Sea Borders Sector



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Signature
Berndt Körner
Deputy Executive Director



European Agency for the Management
of Operational Cooperation
at the External Borders of the Member States
of the European Union

www.frontex.europa.eu
Plac Europejski 6, 00-844 Warsaw, Poland
Tel. +48 22 205 95 00
Fax +48 22 205 95 01

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ANNEX:

Observation of Fundamental Rights Officer

Operational activity number: 2015/SBS/05

Prepared by: [REDACTED] (Operational Manager)
[REDACTED] (Operational Analyst)

- ☐ Presented at Directorate Meeting on
- ☐ Circulation Directorate

Approved by ED/ DED:
Date

Director of Operations Division:
[REDACTED]

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1. Background information

1.1. Brief risk assessment

The EU external southern and eastern sea borders have been one of the main sea areas affected by irregular migration from North African countries (Libya, Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria) as well as from Turkey, and by secondary movements originating from Greece, during the last four years. Italy is both, a transit region for irregular migrants heading to other European Union Member States and to a lesser extent a final destination, mainly for migrants arriving from sub-Saharan countries.

The JO Triton 2015 was launched on 1 February 2015 and concluded on 31 January 2016. The aim of the joint operation was the implementation of coordinated operational activities for the purpose of controlling irregular migration flows and combating people's smuggling networks, trafficking of human beings and other cross border crimes from Algeria, Egypt, Greece, Libya, Tunisia and Turkey towards [REDACTED]

Intelligence shows that criminals acting in different countries of departure coordinate activities between them, for example for the acquisition of vessels and the hiring of skippers.

The collection of information by Frontex deployed experts, helped to acquire detailed knowledge on the structure of criminal networks, the profile of migrants and the set-up of migrants' journeys, from their countries of origin to Italy.

During the period of implementation of the JO Triton 2015, the following factors triggering irregular migration to Italy can be mentioned:

- The crisis in Libya, Syria and the activities of extremist groups in Somalia, Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon.
- Emigration from Eritrea due to economic reasons and to a lesser extent recruitment by the Eritrean army.
- Political instability and economic problems in West-and North African countries.

Besides the aforementioned factors, the following aspects have to be considered in context with seaborne immigration in the Central Mediterranean region:

- A high ratio of migrants died in 2015 in the Mediterranean region. According to IOM¹ statistics, there was a 15% increase in 2015 in the number of migrants which lost their lives in the Mediterranean Sea compared to 2014.
- There was a high number of minors amongst Eritrean, Syrian, Somali, Egyptian, Nigerian and Gambian migrants.
- Italy was under constant pressure from irregular migration and faced difficulties in applying registration procedures to all migrants arriving.

¹ <http://missingmigrants.iom.int/mediterranean>

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- The difficulty for migrants from North (mainly Moroccans and Algerians) and West African countries to use traditional routes to enter the EU, such as the western Mediterranean routes.

1.2. Operational aim

To implement coordinated operational activities at the external sea borders of the Central Mediterranean region in order to control irregular migration flows towards the territory of the Member States (MS) of the EU and to tackle cross border crime.

1.3. Period of implementation and operational areas

In accordance with the provision of the Operational Plan, the joint activities started on 01 February 2015 (00:00h LT) and ended on 31 January 2016 (24:00h LT).

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1.4. Participants

The Host MS was Italy, while the Home MS Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, Slovenia, Spain, United Kingdom.

1.5. Financial information

The budget initially foreseen for MSs deployments was 13.500.000,00€. Due to the irregular migration pressure, the JO EPN Triton 2015 was extended and the total final budget committed amounted to 37.464.819,31€.

The level of payments, on 04 March 2016, was equal to 24.143.329.74 (64,4 % of the committed budget). The amount of 13.321.489.57€ (35,6 %) is still to be paid.

2. Achievement of objectives

2.1. Enhance border security including reinforced surveillance thus contributing to SAR operations

- Carrying out maritime border surveillance in order to detect all suspicious ships enabling to intercept persons, preventing unauthorized border crossings, countering and preventing cross-border criminality and taking measures against persons who have crossed the border illegally as well as reporting other illegal activities detected to the competent authorities as well as taking into account that some situations may involve humanitarian emergencies and rescue at sea;
- Supporting the national authorities in disclosing cases of smuggling of migrants, trafficking in human beings and other cross-border crime;
- Supporting, in accordance with international law, the respective competent Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) by providing upon request enhanced reaction capability to effective Search and Rescue (SAR) operations;
- Contributing to the national efforts in the identification of the migrants intercepted/rescued by deploying screening experts to reinforce the HMS systematic registration and identification procedures;

Achieved: JO EPN Triton 2015 has provided an effective border control at external border of the EU.

The selection and use of the MS technical equipment deployed in the JO has been carried out according to their technical capabilities, the operational need and the intelligence collected.

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2.2. Enhance operational cooperation

- High level of MS participation in the operational activities;
- Enhanced cooperation between the national authorities of the host MS as well as on an international level;
- Enhanced cooperation with other Union agencies and bodies or international organisations by implementing multi-character operational concept;
- Seeking an active involvement of Third Countries in the operational activities.

Fully Achieved: The level of Home MS participating in the JO was very high - 27 MS and SAC showing EU solidarity to the increased migratory pressure in Italy.

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2.3. Enhance exchange of information

- Collection of operational information from all operational actors involved;
- Distribution of operational information to all operational actors through the respective authorized channels;
- Implementation of fully automated online reporting system;
- Seeking standardized format and quality of the reports and interviews.
- Use of the "Guidelines for JORA Incident Template" giving detailed information on definitions and establishing a sets of priorities when selecting the appropriate attributes.

Achieved: The information/intelligence collected and received from different sources has been shared among all the actors involved, thus allowing a better decision making in order to tackle the irregular migration phenomena. The collected information assisted Frontex in detecting emerging trends and the analysis of the information recommended operational responses at local and regional level, as well as to other Frontex coordinated JOs.

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The introduction of the Maritime Incident Report allowed local authorities to receive information before the disembarkation of the migrants.

The information exchange between all the actors involved in JO was successful. The daily information package proved to be the most efficient way of reporting between the ICC and Frontex.

2.4. Identify possible risks and threats

- Carrying out debriefing activities to support migration management and obtaining intelligence, thus improving the risk assessments that underpin the operational activities;
- Monitoring political, economic and social situation in the countries of origin and transit.

Achieved: JO EPN Triton 2015 has achieved a better knowledge about the phenomena of the migration related to criminal activities and networks operating in the area.

2.5. Establish and exchange best practices

- Delivering and supporting workshops, meetings, other networking events to participants;
- Delivering and supporting operational briefings/debriefings to all participants of the joint operations including information on the fundamental rights and access to international protection;
- Building on MS capacity by implementing activities related with administrative solutions, standardization, fleet management and operational technologies as well as technical solutions/best practices linked with EUROSUR and/or EU CG Functions;
- Supporting targeted training activities;
- Explore the possibility to step up pre-return assistance by launching a specifically targeted project.

Partially achieved: JO EPN Triton 2015 has fostered practical cooperation among all the Host MS authorities involved as well as Home MS authorities with the same goal, tackled the irregular migration and the cross border crime by delivering briefings, technical meetings, workshops, and ad hoc videoconferences with the neighbored operations.

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3. Link to other Frontex activities and best practices

3.1. European Patrol Network (EPN)

JO EPN Triton 2015 has been focusing on irregular migration and cross border crime in the Central Mediterranean region, in close synergies with other JOs, in particular Poseidon Sea, and

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3.2. Frontex Staff Exchange

The service is provided by the Frontex Sea Borders Sector to external partner authorities under European Patrols Network.

The core idea was to activate the specialized staff of MS authorities, develop their abilities and to bring an added value from the know-how of this network of practitioners. The MS staff is being involved in working visits to counterpart structures, workshops and common initiatives under EPN umbrella. As a result the involved officers learn from each other, exchange experience, share best practices and gradually harmonize the operational procedures.

Using the JO EPN Triton 2015 as a platform the following activities took place under Staff Exchange 2015 Project:

- Staff Exchange for Team Leaders of debriefing teams - linked with EMPACT Op Action Plan 2015: 10 officers (LT, CZ, ES, GR, RO) for 60 man-days [REDACTED]
- Staff Exchange of Intelligence Officers between JO Poseidon Sea 2015 and JO EPN Triton 2015 deployed at [REDACTED]
- EPN Common Patrols in the area EPN Foxtrot (Ionian Sea) shared by Greece and Italy, with the additional participation of Croatia and Slovenia [REDACTED]

3.3. Frontex Positioning system

The system was installed in the Home MS Off shore Patrol Vessels (OPVs) deployed in the JO and allowed the ICC to have a better situational picture regarding the deployed assets in the operational area. An improved situational picture allowed a more cost-effective management of the operational activities.

3.4. Frontex Compatible Image

The system was installed in the Home MS Off shore Patrol Vessels (OPVs) deployed in the JO and live streaming was provided in the ICC Rome which increasing the level situational picture in the ICC Rome.

3.5. EUROSUR Fusion Services

The Eurosur Fusion Services (Geospatial Information, Vessel Monitoring and Tracking, Vessel Detection and Environmental Information) were available to support decision-making, planning and execution of missions. Aligned with operational needs, these services were accessible via the Eurosur Network and the JORA Visualization Module.

3.5.1. Vessel Detection Service (VDS)

The Vessel Detection Service (VDS) was activated in support of maritime surveillance activities. For the correct implementation and exploitation of the service, the Host Member State ensured that each VDS detection was verified by coordinating the adequate follow-up actions. The outcomes of each acquisition and any follow-up actions was reported to Frontex, via the daily package.

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3.5.3. Other services

In the course of the joint operation, various other services were made available:

4. Assessment of joint operational activities

4.1. Supporting Response

4.1.1. Operational concept

Taking in consideration the increased migration pressure in the Central Mediterranean, in close cooperation with Italian authorities, Frontex continued also in 2015 the new JO that merged the former JO EPN Hermes and EPN Aeneas, defining an operational concept with the needed number and profiles/type of resources to be deployed.

The participating MSs showed their solidarity and support to the JO EPN Triton 2015 by contributing with requested human and technical resources allowing enough flexibility adapted to the local circumstances during the JO.

JO EPN Triton 2015 was a multi-purpose operation, focused on border surveillance, with enhanced support to Search and Rescue activities, and also on tackling cross-border crime.

The Italian authorities were responsible for all border related operational activities in the operational areas and in the reception/detention centres. On behalf of Italy, and through the Ministry of Interior, the main Frontex partners of JO EPN Triton 2015

The actions during the implementation of the JO consisted of the

By deploying the above mentioned JO EPN Triton 2015 provided additional support to the Italian authorities in the management of the external border of the EU.

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The second line activities were implemented in the operational hotspots, but also other disembarkation points were covered by Frontex deployed teams. The flexibility shown by the Host and Home MS as regards the place of deployment of the teams represented an added value for the information collection as 95% of the landings were covered.

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The fundamental rights of the individuals were safeguarded during the operation. All operational activities at sea were conducted in full compliance with Community law, the relevant national legislation and existing provisions of international law. The operational aim was implemented in full compliance with the respect for fundamental rights in particular the access to international protection and the compliance with the principle of non-refoulement. Consequently, no allegations on possible violations of fundamental rights during the JO have been reported.

4.1.2. Operational results

The primary objective of the JO Triton 2015 was to provide support to the Italian authorities in managing its maritime borders, including saving lives at sea and also monitoring parallel activities (such as trafficking in human beings, smuggling, environmental crimes, illegal fishing). In addition, it was also a primary objective to collect operational intelligence from migrants during debriefing activities.

From 1 February 2015 to 31 January 2016, 1 103 incidents were reported within the framework of the JO Triton 2015. Of these incidents, 1 081 were related to illegal immigration, involving the apprehension of 155 982 irregular migrants and the arrest of 491 people smugglers. A decreasing trend (-7%) can be noted in the number of migrants apprehended during the JO compared to the previous joint operation (163 321). During the operational period, the main nationalities reported were Eritrean (38 562), Nigerian (22 575), Somali (12 277), Sudanese (8 888) and Gambian (8 553).

In May 2015, the “European Agenda on Migration” was approved by the European Council and defined immediate measures to be taken in order to handle the massive migration flows arriving in the EU. Together with the new Agenda, the military operation “EUNAVFOR Med” was approved and planned to be launched in three phases. The aim of the operation is to contribute to disrupt the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks in the Southern Central Mediterranean Sea.

On October 2015, EUNAVFOR Med launched Phase IIA, Operation Sophia [REDACTED]

During the JO Triton 2015, 305 fatalities were reported within the framework of the joint operation, showing a sharp increase (-78%) compared to the 171 fatalities reported during the previous joint operation. These fatalities correspond only to the dead bodies recovered by the Italian authorities and not to the higher number of migrants that were reported as missing. Moreover, according to information provided by IOM² the number of estimated fatalities in the Mediterranean Sea reached 3 770 cases in 2015. This number of deaths shows an increase of approximately 15% compared to 2014 (3 279).

Of the total number of illegal immigration incidents (1 081) reported during the JO Triton 2015, [REDACTED] Moreover, 89% of these incidents were reported as SAR incidents, involving the rescue of 153 123 migrants.

In addition, four incidents were reported in the operational area related to the smuggling of goods involving the arrest of 30 smugglers and the seizure of -46 000 kilograms of Cannabis. Moreover, seven incidents related to pollution were reported during JO Triton 2015. Furthermore, five incidents related to preventions of departure involving the apprehension of 543 migrants and four incidents related to third country actions involving 305 irregular migrants.

It is worth mentioning that during the JO Triton 2015, JDJs and JSTs deployed mainly in [REDACTED] constantly referred to possible cases of trafficking in human beings involving mainly young females from [REDACTED] countries that were smuggled into the EU for sexual exploration. Concrete cases were referred to the Italian authorities during different landings, but the follow up results are unknown.

Of the total number of irregular migrants who were apprehended within the framework of the JO Triton 2015 from 1 February 2015 to 31 January 2016 (155 982), -91% departed from Libya, -7% departed from Egypt, -1% departed from Turkey, -0.5% departed from Greece, -0.4% departed from Tunisia, and -0.1% departed from Algeria.

Compared to the previous joint operation, migration flows during the operational period of the JO Triton 2015 showed the following trends in relation to the main areas of departure: -2% decrease in the number of migrants that arrived directly from Libya; -27% decrease in the number of migrants that arrived directly from Greece; -27% increase in the number of migrants that arrived directly from Egypt, -55% decrease in the number of migrants that arrived directly from Tunisia, -76% decrease in the number of incidents reported from Turkey and 17% increase in the number of migrants that arrived from Algeria.

The added value of the JO Triton 2015 was to contribute to the management of the external sea borders by the Italian authorities in light of the high number of irregular migrants arriving in Italy: the number of migrants apprehended during the implementation of the joint operation decreased by -7% compared to the previous joint operation.

4.1.3. Operational coordination structures

The direct partner of Frontex was the Italian Ministry of Interior who assigned the Guardia di Finanza to be the national authority leading and coordinating the implementation of JO EPN Triton 2015.

The ICC was established in the premises of the [REDACTED]. The ICC met the Frontex requirements for hosting the JO.

² <http://missingmigrants.iom.int/mediterranean>

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Three LCCs were established [REDACTED] thus providing maritime operational picture in order to coordinate the maritime and aerial assets participating in the JO. The LCCs also performed the task of filling the JORA database [REDACTED]

The practical deployment and operational coordination of the national and foreign resources was led by the JCB according to the Operational Plan. There were no major shortcomings identified in that regard.

The role of the NCC was mainly regarding the final validation of the incidents in the JORA application. Good level of cooperation between the NCC and the Intelligence Officer (IO) deployed in the ICC that allowed all participants to be updated as regards the final statistics and intelligence.

The establishment of a pool of Team Leaders (TLs) has facilitated the contact and the support to the local/regional authorities, including the support to the police stations, receptions centres and the immigration offices.

4.1.4. Resources deployed

Assessment of capacity and performance of deployed human resources

In total 26 MSs contributed with the deployment of 133 Debriefing Experts (14 SGO Debriefing experts), 101 Screening Experts, 28 Registration and Fingerprinting Experts, 2 Advanced Level Documents Experts, 5 Field Press Officers and 6 Frontex Support Officers, including 2 SGO FSO. 15 Home MSs also contributed with the deployment of 37 National Officials (NO).

The above mentioned deployments complemented the host MS' deployment of IOs (1 officer per month), Team Leaders (between 5 and 14 officers deployed per month), ICC staff (11 officers per month), Italian Coast Guard Liaison Officer (1 officer per month), Italian NAVY Liaison Officer (1 officer per month), and 51 GdF/CG LO-Technical Equipment (1GdF/1CG on board aerial/naval asset deployed by Home MSs).

Two Frontex representatives were deployed in the Operational HQ EUNAVFOR MED and Force HQ Cavour in order to ensure the efficient coordination between JO EPN Triton 2015 and EUNAVFOR MED - Operation Sofia.

The ICC Coordinator, ICC staff, IO, CC/LO, CG/LO and NAVY/EUNAVFOR MED LO were deployed in the frame of JO EPN Triton 2015 and carried out their tasks with high level of professionalism and commitment.

Similar appreciation goes for the [REDACTED] their knowledge of the operational area, modus operandi and useful support was shared with the ICC reporting all the activities performed in their area of competence.

The deployment of 9 JDT [REDACTED] managed to cover the landing areas within the hotspots or in other ports and to collect preliminary information (both factual and visual) after the disembarkation of migrants that supported the national efforts of criminal investigation.

The cooperation between the deployed experts and the Team Leaders was on a satisfactory level, despite some language barrier that appeared in some cases. The Team Leaders were in daily contact with the IO deployed in ICC. Furthermore, the Frontex Operational Team was in constant video link with both the IO, the JST and the JDT.

The prompt reaction of the IO to activate the JDT in order for it to be present during the disembarkation of a new vessel continued to be efficient and improved the quality of the information gathered upon the arrival of migrants and shared among the participants. In particular, the information gathered and the smooth flow of information performed during the operational period met the expectations of the Operational Team.

According to the irregular migration pressure, it is considered that the deployments of JDTs were enough to cover all the needs for obtaining intelligence. The number of JDTs was decided according to the intelligence need and in agreement between Host MS and Frontex.

Initial lack of information of the local authorities regarding the screening activities limited the possible support delivered by Frontex deployed experts. Situation was mitigated by the Operational Team with field

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visits that raised awareness for Frontex capability to support the Host MS identification procedures. It is worth mentioning that in some cases the lack of proper working conditions in the ports for screening interviews hampered a correct implementation of the activity.

The JSTs deployed in Frontex coordinated operation in Italy, it can be assessed as important element of the JO providing support to the Host MS in identification procedures. The number of JSTs was decided in agreement between Host MS and Frontex.

The FSO deployed in [REDACTED] was extremely important for maintaining situational awareness, monitoring, briefing/debriefing of Host and Home MS crews, supporting the field and press visits as well as facilitating coordination of the operation at the local level and within the hotspot. The need to have a contact point at local level that interacts with the local authorities is fundamental for the proper implementation of the activities.

The GdF/CG LO-TE on board of Home MS aerial/naval assets have been very effective advisors, using their knowledge in the area and overcoming sometimes the language barriers when there was a need to contact directly the local authorities or other assets in the area.

The deployment of NOs in the ICC has proved to be an added value for the proper implementation of the operational activities. NOs have all the knowledge about the crew, the asset, and their surveillance capabilities and can provide the recommendations during the JCB meetings based on this knowledge.

Assessment of capacity and performance of deployed technical equipment (counted as deployment per month)

During the JO EPN Triton 2015, 41 Fixed Wing Airplanes (FWA) were deployed, 29 from Home MS (Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and Spain) and 12 from Host MS (Coast Guard and Guardia di Finanza) to fill in the gaps of deployed technical equipment. All the FWA were deployed in [REDACTED] in order to cover all operational areas according to the instructions received from the ICC Rome or request from a MRCC Rome to support an ongoing SAR activity.

Twenty six helicopters were deployed, 10 from Home MS (Belgium, Germany, Latvia and Malta) and 16 from Host MS (Guardia di Finanza) in [REDACTED] to deliver additional aerial surveillance in the operational area. [REDACTED]

The aerial means were the most important tool for surveillance, early detection and identification. The long range aerial means have been very effective when detecting small migrants' boats within wide patrolling areas. Occasionally during the regular patrolling, long range aerial assets were used also to support Vessel Detection Service (VDS), however no boats with migrants were detected through this activity. On board all aerial assets deployed in the JO were fitted with sufficient surveillance systems.

A total of 55 Off Shore Patrol Vessels (OPV) were deployed: 37 by the Home MS (Belgium, Croatia, France, Iceland, Malta, Norway, Romania, Sweden and Spain) and 18 by Host MS (Coast Guard, Guardia di Finanza and Navy).

A total of 66 Coastal Patrol Vessels (CPV) were deployed: 22 by the Home MS (Malta, Romania and United Kingdom) and 44 by the Host MS (Coast Guard, Guardia di Finanza and Carabinieri). [REDACTED]

A total of 32 Coastal Patrol Boats (CPB) were deployed: 12 by Home MS (Malta) and 20 by Host MS (Coast Guard, Carabinieri and Guardia di Finanza). [REDACTED]

The task of the maritime assets was mainly to identify and intercept the migrants' boats as well as to act as support to the MRCC Rome SAR events. Surface patrolling activities were implemented within the operational area. In case of available intelligence regarding smuggling of migrants or cross-border criminality, the participating maritime units were requested by the ICC Rome to consider extending their range of patrolling activities. The same applied also to the requests of MRCC Rome to support SAR activities.

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When patrolling, OPV's were always positioned in order to assure constant presence in the most affected areas covering [REDACTED]. The OPV's offered the capability of longer presence at sea with a wider intervention range. The deployment of OPV's was of relevant importance to the support of the Italian national efforts in SAR activities.

The CPV's were focused on monitoring the area [REDACTED]. They were also performing multitask operations in terms of pollution and fisheries control creating synergies among EU entities.

The CPB's deployed were mainly focused in the area [REDACTED]. Harsh weather conditions in the area have shown that the deployment of CPB's during the winter season is extremely difficult making it impossible to fulfil the committed patrolling hours.

CPV's and CPB's were also used to support disembarkations in [REDACTED].

All surface assets deployed in the JO were fitted with sufficient surveillance systems. Some of the smaller surface assets (CPB's and some CPV's) didn't fulfilled the committed number of hours in the SFDs due to the bad weather and sea conditions during the winter time.

The air-naval coordination worked very well since the deployment of a GdF/LO-TE on board of each Home MS asset and the results achieved in terms of response capability to intercept the migrants' boats and save lives at sea was satisfactory.

To allow for better coordination of the SAR events, Coast Guard LO-TE were deployed on board of some of the Home MS OPV's.

Flexible deployment and implementation of the proper operational concept has been the key of success of the JO. Throughout the JO participants demonstrated maximum flexibility in terms of accepting the changes into mission schedule and readiness to perform unplanned missions when required.

It is to be mentioned that none of the participating assets had technical problems that would prevent them from finishing their mission or carrying out their committed patrolling hours. All regular maintenance and necessary repairs were conducted during the crew rests, making all participating assets readily available for patrolling whenever planned or necessary.

4.2. Situational Awareness

4.2.1. Threats and Risks, modus operandi and trends identified

During the implementation of the JO Triton 2015, the following changes to the factors related to the threat emerged:

- Continued arrival of migrants (mainly from Horn of African and West African countries) from Libya.
The volatile situation in Libya, as well as the high level of insecurity and the low level of surveillance along the coast of Libya have become strong 'push factors' for third country nationals in order to leave this country or to use it merely as a transit country.
- After the growth of the arrivals in Greece since mid-April and the subsequent disproportionate flow of migrants transiting the Western Balkan route in mid-June, the number of irregular migrants from Middle Eastern and Asian countries (mainly Syrians and to a much lesser extent Palestinians from Syria, Afghans, Pakistanis and Iraqis) arriving from Libya sharply decreased during the second half of 2015 compared to the second half of 2014.

[REDACTED]

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- The activities of Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria and at the borders of Cameroon and Chad, as well as the activities of Al Shabab in Somalia might increase the displacement of migrants towards Libya and subsequently to Italy.

During this joint operation no new *modi operandi* were identified. However, with the presence of naval assets participating in the EUNAVFORMED and Mare Sicuro maritime operations since June 2015 and the involvement of NGO vessels in rescuing migrants at sea close to Libya's territorial waters, the number of migrants apprehended remained stable, even after the sharp decrease in the number of Syrian nationals and other Middle Eastern and Asian migrants.

During the JO Triton 2015, the following trends were identified:

From Libya:

- The number of irregular migrants travelling from Libya to Italy, despite the decrease in the number of nationals from Middle Eastern and Asian countries, showed a stable trend compared to the previous joint operation, mainly due to the sharp increase in the number of migrants from West and Horn of African countries, remaining at the same high level as in the previous year.
- As in previous years, the vast majority of departures took place from the western coast of Libya between Zuwara and Gars Garabulli. It is worth mentioning that since September 2015 no departures were reported from the area of Zuwara due to the decision of the local authorities to stop any departure of migrants from this region.
- Most of the migrants arrived aboard unseaworthy rubber dinghies and wooden boats. The vast majority of the migrants were kept in safes houses under the control of the smuggling networks until the time of departure.
- Currently, a wide diversity of assets are patrolling in the [REDACTED]
 - In June, the operational area of the Frontex JO Triton 2015 was extended [REDACTED] In addition, the number of assets in this area was increased.
 - The Italian authorities continued with their naval operation "Mare Sicuro".
 - In May, the EU's naval operation EUNAVFOR Med was approved, and several naval vessels were [REDACTED]
 - In addition, four vessels belonging to various NGOs (Sea-Watch, Norwegian Society for Search and Rescue, Medecins Sans Frontieres, and Migrant Offshore Aid Station) were also patrolling in the Central Mediterranean Sea close to the main departure areas in Libya, in some cases rescuing migrants as close as 7 nm from Tripoli.
 - On the one hand the higher number of assets rescuing migrants in the Central Mediterranean led to an increase in the number of early detections of migrant boats, but on the other hand [REDACTED]
- Information gathered from different interviews, social media and open sources indicated the presence of Da'ish along the routes used by smuggling networks operating in Libya.

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[REDACTED]

The presence of Da'ish did not have a direct impact on the migration flow during the JO Triton 2015. People smuggling networks were able to divert the flow through alternatives routes in order to safeguard the lives of those claiming to be Christian as well as to minimise the interference of Da'ish in the smuggling business.

A strong increase or the presence of Da'ish in Libya, [REDACTED]

From Egypt:

- The number of arrivals from Egypt decreased by 27% in 2015 compared to 2014. Statistics indicate that this was mainly due to a decrease in the number of Syrians using this route. In addition, the readmission agreement between Italy and Egypt, [REDACTED]
- Nevertheless, the route continues to be active and the number of migrants arriving mainly from African countries through Egypt remains high.
- Some of the migrants arriving from Egypt have stated that they were transferred at sea from one boat to another at least twice before arriving in the EU. These transfers at sea involve not only migrants departing from Egypt, but also migrants that initially departed from Libya.
- This shows a good level of coordination and collaboration amongst different networks operating in Egypt, Turkey and Syria.

From Turkey:

- Irregular migration directly from Turkey towards Italy showed the sharpest decreasing trend (-78%) compared to the other routes in the Central Mediterranean. [REDACTED]

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- The types of boats used varied: wooden fishing boats, yachts or sailing boats. In relation to yachts and sailing boats some of them are reported as stolen.

From Tunisia:

- Within the framework of the current readmission agreement, the number of migrants trying to reach Italy from Tunisia remained relatively low.

- Most migrants were Tunisian nationals and to a much lesser extent Algerian.

From Greece:

From Algeria:

4.2.2. Information gathering and exchange

The Italian authorities reinforced the current intelligence structure of the IO and the JDT by creating a pool of officers, who rotate on a monthly basis and are fully dedicated to the assigned tasks when deployed in a Frontex JO. This structure has proved to be optimal regarding the quality of the information and intelligence gathered and efficient concerning relations with the local authorities.

The IO reacted promptly and activated the JDTs and JSTs so that they could be present during the disembarkation of migrants from new vessels. Thus, the quality of the collected information improved and it was shared amongst the participants. Furthermore, the information gathered and its smooth flow during the operation met the expectations of the operational analyst.

JDTs and JSTs were deployed within the framework of the JO Triton 2015 in the locations of [REDACTED]. The total number of interviews carried out during the JO Triton 2015 was 2 069 [REDACTED]. In addition, 460 landing reports were issued by the debriefing teams in [REDACTED]. Furthermore, more than 550 interviews were sent to Europol by the Italian authorities. During the JO Triton 2015 a total of 36 438 persons were screened by Frontex teams.

The deployment of debriefing experts, with experience in migration related issues to different reception centres hosting migrants, as well as the long term deployment of SGOs, significantly improved the quality of the information gathered and should be enhanced during future operations.

Following the operational plan the reporting structure was carried out without problems. The cornerstones consisted of the 'Daily Package', prepared by ICC staff to be distributed to all involved participants/institutions and the use of 'JORA'.

In accordance to the Operational Plan the exchange of information was carried out without problems.

The Frontex Situation Centre (FSC) had the responsibility to manage close to real time the data processing by collecting information, validating incident reports in the Joint Operations Reporting Application (JORA) and providing the situational picture by producing and disseminating Daily Situational Reports, as well as

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providing a prompt response on serious incidents, based on information received through JORA, operational reports and open source information.

During the implementation phase, FSC was reinforced with support officers deployed by participating Member States to Frontex HQ. The FSC was available during working days as well as on weekends.

JORA was used to exchange operational information with all the participants of the JO by collecting data via a standardized Incident Report template. A constantly updated situational picture was provided through Daily Situational Reports and the visualization in the JORA Dashboard and Eurosur. In accordance with the Operational Plan, the operation entered in JORA was created properly and within the deadline. The reporting structure was respondent to the operational needs, and the incident template for the data collection was created on time.

During the operation, remote support was provided in adherence with the requests received from the end users. The feedbacks received were managed accordingly by the JORA Product & Service Management. From a business perspective, the results of the implementation may be considered satisfactory.

The following picture came apparent regarding timeliness of arrival of incidents to the Frontex Situation Centre. (Number of incidents reported inside/outside the agreed reporting period, according to the Operational Plan).

During the operational phase 1.103 incidents were reported to FSC.

The FOSS (Frontex-One-Stop-Shop) portal was used in order to share operational-related information with all Joint Operation participants. In addition, e-mail service was used for daily reporting. FOSS was used according to the standards defined in the Operational Plan. Since FOSS is the main platform and central reference point for operational related information, it is recommended that awareness raising activities would be undertaken to further promote its use and functionalities, particularly among national authorities and at the deployment locations.

4.3. Development

4.3.1. Operational cooperation

Cooperation between host and home MSs

JO EPN Triton 2015 continued the activities of JO Triton 2014 without interruption and the cooperation between the Italian national authorities and the participating MS went smoothly, as all actors were very much familiar with objectives and activities within the JO.

All participating MS that deployed assets in JO EPN Triton 2015 provided excellent support to the activities developed, with the needed flexibility in the daily planning and availability to support in case of requests of the ICC or the Italian and Maltese MRCC in case of SAR events.

[REDACTED]

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Cooperation between national authorities in Host MS

Since the establishment of the NCC in the Ministry of Interior in Rome, cooperation between Guardia di Finanza (GdF), Guardia Costiera (GC), Marina Militare (MM), Carabinieri (CC) and Polizia di Stato (PdS) has been enhanced and fostered further within JO every year. All authorities were cooperating closely upon detection, interception and disembarkation of migrants in order to facilitate the information gathering, identification of facilitators/skipper and to collect operational information related to incidents.

ICC played an important role in enhancing the cooperation between the authorities.

The presence of LO from GC in the ICC was crucial in terms of the daily cooperation between the authorities and specifically updating the ICC concerning the SAR incidents, thus contributing for the situational picture.

LO of EUNAVFOR MED-Operation Sophia, was deployed in the ICC Rome to contribute for the proper implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures between both operations as concerns the planning of the patrolling activities and the information/intelligence sharing. The LO was also representing the Italian Navy, authority coordinating the implementation of the naval operation [REDACTED]

Cooperation with other Union agencies and bodies or international organizations

The concept of “multiagency cooperation” was implemented within the JO EPN Triton 2015, enabling multifunctional approach aiming to improve the border surveillance at the external maritime borders, including the counter of cross border criminality, also contributing to optimize cost-effectiveness of the activities of relevant competent authorities.

During the JO Frontex facilitated cooperation with EUROPOL, EMSA, EFCA, EASO, UNHCR and IOM. In practice, the cooperation with the aforementioned institutions worked as following:

- **EUROPOL:** full cooperation with Europol was established since the very beginning of the JO in order to support national authorities to dismantle the criminal networks involved in smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings (THB) through exchange of information and intelligence via Europol National Unit.

547 interviews containing personal data were shared with Europol, via the EUROPOL’s National Unit in Rome enabling the flow of information between the Italian authorities and EUROPOL in accordance with the agreement defined in the operational plan.

- **EMSA:** EMSA received through the Italian Guardia Costiera the whole collected information (pictures and/or videos) related to seven possible pollution case that was detected by participating asset during patrolling activities.
- **EFCA:** based on the existing Working Arrangement, Frontex offered to EFCA the possibility to cooperate in the framework of the JO EPN Triton, based on the exchange of information/reports related to EFCA’ activities in the maritime domain, specifically addressed to tackle irregular fishing activities. Emails and telephone were established as communication channels.
- **EASO:** EASO received on regular basis information about the migratory flows, asylum seekers and intelligence on migratory patterns in the region.
- **UNHCR and IOM:** The activities of JO EPN Triton 2015 were implemented in full respect for the fundamental rights of the migrants, specific information being provided to the deployed officers regarding this aspect. Both organisations were invited to provide specific briefings to the participants of the JO during the centralized operational briefings in Rome.

Cooperation with Third Countries

Cooperation with TC of interest, concretely Turkey, Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, is of the outmost importance for the achievement of the objectives of this type of JO.

Frontex and Italy agreed to deploy two EGY observers in the ICC Rome for a period of three weeks in August. Taking into consideration the situation in other mentioned North African countries, there was no deployment of observers or establishment of a point of contact with those countries.

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Frontex established contact with EUBAM Libya to use aforementioned entity as a bridge to get in contact with the relevant Libyan authorities.

Frontex coordination role

The Operational Team was composed of an Operational Manager (OM), initially three and at a later stage four Operational Team members, Operational Analyst (OA), Support Officer and Operational Assistant. OM was responsible for the overall planning, monitoring and evaluating activities.

Cooperation between Operational Team and HMS authorities was very positive.

The implementation of the JO was monitored by a Frontex Coordinating Officer (FCO) assigned for JOs hosted by Italy. Additionally, one FSO was deployed in [REDACTED] during the all period of the JO.

The FOC was deployed continuously to coordinate the activities in the ICC, to monitor the implementation of the activities and foster the cooperation among the deployed resources of JO EPN Triton. The FOC cooperated closely with the OM, FCO, as well as the ICC Coordinator, ICC Staff and NOs.

The OA monitored the performance of the IO and the JDTs, and issued Weekly Analytical Reports/Updates (WAR/U), presenting the analytical findings, making recommendations to improve the performances of the resources deployed, aiming to enhance the operational results. Furthermore, the OA made important recommendations to the IO in order to improve the quality of the information gathering process.

4.3.2. Operational briefing / debriefing

The operational briefing concept developed by Frontex, consisted of two complementary parts: the General briefing part provided by Frontex and the National briefing provided by the host MS (based on the common briefing package).

Operational briefings upon arrival on the NOs in the ICC were provided by the FOC, ICC Coordinator and GC/LO.

The crews of the deployed assets have also received operational briefing provided by Frontex on spot. The NOs were responsible to forward the information on National briefing to their crews.

Debriefing experts, TC Observers and FSO were briefed in a centralized way at the premises of Ministry of Interior (Mol) prior to their deployment to the operational area by OT and Mol representatives. The monthly operational briefing in Rome became a useful platform for exchanging information and was highly appreciated by the experts. Each new rotation of experts received updated information about the situation before their deployment started.

The Debriefing Advisor delivered tailored briefing/workshops to the deployed experts and supported the debriefing activities on spot upon disembarkation of the migrants and in the reception centres. With support from the Debriefing Advisor, the deployed debriefing experts received preliminary instructions and recommendations related to their everyday work and the acting operational analysts guided their interviews by communicating the information gaps or priorities.

FSC staff participated in the briefing delivered to the crews following VDS acquisitions when deployed in EURTF Catania and [REDACTED]

4.4. Emergency Response

Taking in consideration the high irregular migration pressure in the Central Mediterranean region, the JO EPN Triton 2015 remained an emergency response. The activities and resources deployed have been satisfactory taking in consideration the irregular migration pressure and the budget of the JO.

Following the European Agenda on Migration, Frontex considerably reinforced the support to SAR activities by extending the operational area of JO EPN Triton 2015 [REDACTED] This enabled Frontex assets to be involved in the Search and Rescue operations of 38,53% out of the total migrants disembarked in Italy during the period of implementation of the JO EPN Triton 2015.

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Four/six OPVs were deployed per month that allowed a strong and sustainable presence at the open sea and the territorial waters and coastal areas were patrolled by CPVs and CPBs according to the needs identified by the Host MS.

Aerial surveillance has been kept on a high level with the deployment of two/three FWAs and one/two helicopters, all equipped with the needed surveillance equipment and able to cover the whole operational area.

4.5. Implementation of the Hotspot Concept and the European Union Regional Task Force (EURTF) Catania

As part of the immediate action to assist frontline Member States in meeting the challenges presented by high migratory pressures at the EU's external borders, in the European Agenda on Migration (May 2015), the EU Commission in developed a new "hotspot" approach.

The aim of the "hotspot" approach was to provide a platform for the EU Agencies to intervene, rapidly, in an integrated manner and according to their mandate, in frontline Member States when there is a crisis due to specific and disproportionate migratory pressure at their external borders, consisting of mixed migratory flows, and the Member State concerned cannot adequately cope with that pressure. The support offered and the duration of assistance to the Member State concerned would depend on its needs and the development of the situation.

A "hotspot" was defined as a border section or region with extraordinary migratory pressure and mixed flows that require reinforced and concerted EU-Agencies-support. In Italy the "hotspot" was considered as the place of disembarkation of the migrants rescued or intercepted at sea. For Frontex, the implementation of the hotspot approach was directly connected with the activities of Joint Operation Triton 2015 and therefore it was integrated in the Operational Plan of the Joint Operation.

The general objective of the "hotspot" approach was to have 100% identification and registration of the third country nationals arriving at EU external borders and to step up the fight against people's smuggling and trafficking and human beings.

The management tool for the implementation of the Hotspot concept in Italy was the "European Union Regional Task Force" (EURTF) established in Catania.

Starting from June 2015, successively in the EURTF Catania the following EU agencies and authorities were present: Frontex (5 representatives), Europol (1 representative), EASO (1 representative), ITA Mol (2 liaison officers), ITA GdF (2 liaison officers), ITA CC (1 liaison officer), ITA CG (1 liaison officer). Also in January 2016 the EU Commission (COM) sent 1 representative in the EURTF.

On the spot, Frontex component implements its activities according to Frontex mandate and in line with Operational plan:

- Operational component monitors, assess and report the procedures implemented by the local/national authorities in the management of the landing/disembarkation (challenges and problems), as well guides and advises the Joint Screening Teams (JSTs);
- Intelligence component guides and advises the Joint Debriefing Teams (JDTs);
- Liaison with International Organizations or NGOs operating on the ground and communication vis-à-vis VIPs or Media.

JO EPN Triton 2015 played an important role in the implementation of the Hotspot concept as follows:

- Support debriefing activities by deploying Joint Debriefing Teams in order to collect information for RA purposes;
- Support to screening activities by deploying screening experts in order to improve the identification procedures;
- Support registration of migrants by deploying fingerprinting officers;
- Support the security checks of the travel/identification documents by deploying advanced level document officers;

The Agency had the leading role in the establishment of the EURTF Catania as tasked by the COM to deal with the logistical and technical arrangements (service provider).

The presence of Frontex in the EURTF Catania was an added value to the implementation of the Hotspot concept and has allowed Frontex to:

- reinforce its presence on the spot - logistical and operational support to assets and experts deployed;
- ensure a trustful and constructive presence in the operational area;
- foster the daily cooperation with local authorities - assessment of needs at local level;
- effectively monitor the implementation of the operational activities and their link/integration into the national procedures;
- set a smoother and more practical exchange of operational information with EU partners;

Out of the 6 identified Hotspots in Italy 3 were already operational during the implementation of JO EPN Triton 2015

Frontex and Italy agreed that foreseen full capacity deployment in each Hotspot would be: 10 fingerprinting experts, 4 screening experts, 4 debriefing experts, 1 document expert, 4 team leaders and 4 cultural mediators. In total, per Hotspot, Frontex would deploy 27 experts per month.

However, due to the low level of offers received from the participating MS, Frontex support was the following:

- 25 experts - 6 debriefing experts, 4 screening experts, 6 fingerprinting experts, 1, Advanced-level Document Officer, 1 FSO, 4 team leaders and 4 cultural mediator;
- 21 experts - 4 debriefing experts, 4 screening experts, 2 fingerprinting experts, 1 Advanced-level Document Officer, 1 FSO, 2 team leaders and 4 cultural mediators;
- 14 experts - 4 debriefing experts, 4 screening experts, 2 team leaders and 4 cultural mediators;

Nevertheless Frontex had considerable deployment of experts at the main disembarkation points also prior to their operational establishment as hotspot (e.g.)

During the period of implementation of the Hotspot concept, the presence of the JO EPN Triton 2015 Operational Team directly on the spot via EURTF Catania, allowed a proper assessment of the challenges, which were reflected in the Frontex's contribution to the Italian Hotspots Standard Operational Procedures.

4.6. Cooperation JO EPN Triton and EUNAVFOR Med (Operation Sophia)

In light of the Council Decision (CFSP) 2015/778 of 18 May 2015, the European Union has established a military operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED). The aim of the operation is to contribute to disrupt the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks in the Southern Central Mediterranean Sea.

Taking in consideration that both JO EPN Triton 2015 and the EUNAVFOR MED were addressing irregular migration in particular the fight against cross border criminality but with different mandates, aims, objectives, SOP's and using different typologies of deployed assets, it was of the utmost importance to clearly define the terms and conditions of the operational cooperation in order to maximize the effectiveness of the operational activities in the South Mediterranean Sea and to ensure the consistency of the EU operational activities in the area.

The interaction with EUNAVFOR MED - Operation Sophia, took place on a multitude of levels:

Strategic:

EUNAVFOR MED and Frontex are regularly briefing Brussels decision makers through the PSC and the EUMC on the state of play of their operations. EUNAVFOR MED and Triton Operational plans were aligned and EUNAVFOR followed the same rules for the treatment of migrants (disembarkation, port locations, and hand-over to national authorities) as Triton Operation;

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Operational:

Following the Agreement by exchange of letters between Frontex Executive Director and EUNAVFOR MED Operation Commander, dated of 14.07.2015, a set of basic procedures were agreed to support all of those operating and facilitating the operational cooperation between both structures and actors:

- Liaison Officers were exchanged in order to facilitate the communications between the coordination structures, to maximize the planning of the patrolling activities at sea and to ensure the efficient and smooth exchange of information and intelligence. Information about ongoing incidents and patrolling schedules of both parties are also shared.
- EUNAVFOR MED has posted liaison officers to the ICC Rome and EURTF office in Catania for day to day operational cooperation. EUNAVFOR MED through their Liaison Officers has access to Frontex operational and analytical data related to the Triton operation (JORA and EUROSUR applications).
- Sharing the positions of the both parties units have been enabled by Frontex Joint Operation Reporting Application which is used as platform;
- Gaining advantage of the presence of an EU military operation in the area, proper coordination was mandatory to ensure the safety of the assets deployed under JO Triton and EUNAVFOR MED while operating in LYB SAR area;

In order to support the local authorities at the landing areas, as regards the follow up procedures of identification and criminal investigation, EUNAVFOR Med units have also used Frontex incident reporting template and procedure (Maritime Incident Report). Immediate reporting of the ongoing incident, evidence collected, possible identification of facilitators and nationalities of the migrants intercepted/rescued is made to the Frontex ICC, via EUNAVFOR MED/LO, that forwards the information to the competent local authorities.

Cooperation between the Risk Analysis Units of EUNAVFOR Med (HQ CJ2) and Frontex was established during the preparation of the first phase of the military operation and improved with the launch of Operation Sophia phase IIA. Currently the level of cooperation in the field of analysis of intelligence can be qualified as positive.

Operating crews from both operations have been instructed to take the needed actions to prevent that migrants' boats are left adrift, avoiding possible reuse of the migrants' boats left adrift by the criminal networks as well as eliminating a danger to maritime safety. The actions include towing of the vessel or its diversion to a Coastal State or if no other practicable alternative exist, dumping at sea may be conducted under force majeure;

The main challenge regarding the cooperation with EUNAVFOR MED was the delays in the incident reporting from the EUNAVFOR Med units, which hampered the follow up procedures of identification and criminal investigation. Produced reports were military classified and in order to be shared with external partners, they need to be declassified in a procedure that takes a long period which is not suitable with the law enforcement activities. Also the shared position of EUNAVFOR MED units with an accuracy of 25 NM and a timeframe of 4 hours, limited a more effective management of the assets operating in the area taking in consideration the fast operational actions needed.

5. Implementation of Regulation (EU) No 656/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council

5.1 Disembarkation in Third Countries

All the migrants intercepted or rescued were disembarked in Italy. Disembarkation in third countries has not been foreseen in the operational plan. As a result, no such action was carried out during the implementation period of JO EPN Triton 2015.

To meet the requirements of the Regulation, the special template for the reports of disembarkation in Third Countries was made available to the deployed assets, but was never used as no disembarkations in third countries occurred.

The operational area of JO EPN Triton 2015 included the SAR regions of Italy and Malta. Nevertheless, the MRCC received many SAR requests from boats in distress in Libyan SAR. Communication by the MRCC with

the Libyan SAR authorities was always established, but no replies or cooperation were received. All the migrants rescued in the Libyan SAR Area were disembarked in Italy.

5.2 Procedures regarding the identification of persons in particular situations

The training in first aid is included in the basic training of the law enforcement authorities involved in the operation. The Frontex co-financed participating maritime assets included crew members with basic first aid training. Upon interception or rescued the participating maritime assets informed immediately the ICC/IMRCC of the presence of any vulnerable persons on board.

Upon disembarkation, prior to any other action, local authorities rendered the basic human needs of the apprehended and rescued persons such as food, shelter and medical assistance. In this initial procedure, it was involved Red Cross, Save the Children, UNHCR, as well as members of the local Immigration Offices with the support of interpreters and other responsible bodies ensuring screening and personal assessment of the persons apprehended or rescued at the designated points of disembarkation in Italy.

Frontex deployed Guest Officers supported Italian authorities upon disembarkation, paying special attention to possible victims of trafficking of human beings. Any person expressing, in any way, a fear of suffering serious harm if (s)he is returned to his/her country of origin or former habitual residence, asking or claiming for asylum or any other form of international protection, was referred by the GOs to the Italian Team Leader with whom they work.

The Italian Team Leader was responsible to hand over those persons referred by the GOs to the competent Italian authority - local Prefectures (via local Immigration Offices) and Department for Civil Freedom and Immigration for an examination of their status.

5.3 Communication and cooperation channels

National Coordination Centre (NCC), International Coordination Centre (ICC) and Italian Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) were in permanent contact with each other. The NCC as the direct partner of Frontex assured the strategic and overall implementation of the JO and was responsible to define the port of disembarkation of the migrants intercepted or rescued. The ICC was responsible for the operational implementation of the JO and the reporting system. The MRCC, in its capacity of SAR authority in Italy, coordinated all search and rescued incidents.

6. Main conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
<u>Supporting Response</u>	
Social, political and economic instability in the countries of origin and departure fostered the number of migrants attempting to reach Italy.	
Due increased number of technical equipment and human resource, the response of the JO EPN Triton 2015 was appropriate and cost-effective.	
The coordination structures and operational actors' roles were clearly defined at the central level (NCC and ICC and LCCs).	
Decrease in migrant numbers arriving in Italy during the JO Triton 2015 compared to the previous joint operation. Nevertheless, the number of irregular migrants arriving in Italy across the Central Mediterranean Sea remained very high.	
There was a higher number of people smugglers arrested in 2015 compared to 2014. The JDTs and JSTs provided good support in the identification of people smugglers.	
Taking into account that the vast majority of the migrants are arriving in Italy undocumented, security checks should be considerably increased.	In cooperation with Europol, Frontex should deliver tailored workshops/briefings to JDTs and JSTs to increase their awareness and improve their skills to identify possible foreign fighters and/or radicalized persons.
The SGO concept, especially in regard to the flexibility and long-term deployment, offered real added value in respect of the activities carried out in the field.	Frontex should continue to select and use SGOs. An easier and more flexible and agile process for SGO selection is recommended.
Deployment of Field Press Officer (FPO) in EUTF Catania ensured a good coordination of the presence of the media on the ground, arranging the necessary authorisations with the Italian authorities, organising interviews with officers/local authorities.	To continue deploying FPO in order to facilitate the access of Press and other delegations to deployed assets.

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The nationality of migrants identified as unknown during the JO Triton 2015 decreased to - 8% compared to the previous joint operation - 34%.	
Although ICC/LCC staff, the crew members of the deployed assets, as well as the deployed debriefing and screening experts performed their tasks with a high degree of professionalism and dedication, there is still room for improvement.	Continue the already established exchange of good practices. The established pool of operators in ICC should be kept during JO Triton 2016.
The number of migrants' boats left adrift by Frontex assets came close to zero, thus ensuring safety at sea for all maritime traffic and preventing the possible re-use of the boats by the criminal networks. Good cooperation between Frontex participants and MRCC and ICC assured the fulfilment of this tasks.	
NGO operating with vessels to support Search and Rescue activities South of [REDACTED] left migrant's boats adrift, jeopardizing the collection of evidence and giving the opportunity to the facilitators recover them and use them again.	To improve to cooperation with NGOs by organizing and/or participating in tailored meeting(s) to increase their awareness.
Even though the Frontex support to Italy was promoted on spot via the EURTF Catania, there is still a need for further awareness at local level. It has been identified that local criminal investigation teams from areas where no Frontex JOs are being implemented, are not fully aware of Frontex possible contribution to their tasks and activities.	To organize a workshop(s) with local authorities in the premises of EURTF Catania in order to introduce them to Frontex activities and possible support that could be provided. Tailored leaflets as regards EURTF Catania role and tasks in EN/IT languages could be prepared by Frontex.
Frontex deployed screening and debriefing experts were very well coordinated by the ITA TL, however there is room for improvement when it comes with the deployment of document experts and fingerprinting officers.	JSTs TLs to coordinate and to be responsible for the reporting system, also for the document experts and fingerprinting officers.

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